

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims below replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended): ~~[[An]]~~ A whisker erecting structure, comprising:
a substrate of iron based alloy having a surface or surfaces on which; and
iron oxide whiskers of ~~[[high]]~~ aspect ratio higher than 20 ~~are erected on said surface.~~

2 (Currently amended): ~~An iron based alloy having a surface or surfaces on which iron oxide whiskers of high aspect ratio are erected~~ A whisker erecting structure as claimed in claim 1.
~~In the production of said iron oxide whiskers, a said iron based alloy is brought into contact with oxidative atmosphere so as to react the surface iron atoms with oxygen atoms brought into contact therewith at high temperature, thereby attaining growth as oxide whiskers, wherein said~~
iron oxide whiskers include whiskers of 5nm to 2 μ m diameter.

3-4. (Cancelled).

5. (Currently amended): An iron oxide whisker ~~[[of]]~~, comprising
iron atoms of more than 90 atomic percent of metal atoms;
non-iron metal atoms less than 10 atomic percent; and
oxygen atoms,

wherein said iron oxide whisker has 5nm to 2 μ m diameter and of an aspect ratio higher than 20, ~~wherein the content of non iron metal atoms is less than 10 percent atomic volume.~~

6. (Currently amended): An iron oxide whisker as claimed in claim 5.~~In the production of, wherein said iron oxide whiskers,~~a whisker is made by bringing said iron based alloy is brought into contact with oxidative atmosphere so as to react ~~[[the]]~~ surface iron atoms with oxygen atoms brought into contact therewith at high temperature, thereby attaining growth as oxide whiskers.

7-8. (Cancelled).

9. (Withdrawn): A method of erecting oxide whiskers of a high aspect ratio on a surface or surfaces of an iron or titanium based alloy, which comprises bringing an said iron or titanium based alloy into contact with oxidative atmosphere so as to react the surface iron atoms or the surface titanium atoms with oxygen atoms brought into contact therewith at high temperature, thereby attaining growth as oxide whiskers.

10. (Withdrawn): A method of erecting oxide whiskers of a high aspect ratio on a surface or surfaces of an iron or titanium based alloy, which comprises bringing an said iron or titanium based alloy into contact with oxidative atmosphere so as to react the surface iron atoms or the surface titanium atoms with oxygen atoms brought into contact therewith at high temperature,

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thereby attaining growth as oxide whiskers as claimed in claim 9, wherein the growth of said oxide whiskers is hastened by a temperature gradient provided in an said iron or titanium based alloy.

11. (New): A whisker erecting structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein said iron oxide whiskers contain non-iron metal atoms less than 10 atomic percent.